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SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON GIOVANNI LAJOLO - HOLY SEE'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

11. (U) POPE JOHN PAUL II HAS APPOINTED HIS NUNCIO TO GERMANY, ARCHBISHOP GIOVANNI LAJOLO, AS SECRETARY OF THE SECTION FOR RELATIONS WITH STATE OF THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE, THE HOLY SEE'S EQUIVALENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER. THE OCTOBER 7 APPOINTMENT TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY. LAJOLO SUCCEEDS ARCHBISHOP JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN, WHOM POPE JOHN PAUL II WILL CREATE A CARDINAL AT A VATICAN CITY CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 21. LAJOLO'S APPOINTMENT IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY FOR THE VATICAN'S FOREIGN POLICY. LAJOLO'S MOTHER WAS AMERICAN, AND HE IS CONSIDERED FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE UNITED STATES.

12. (U) LAJOLO (LA-YO-LO) WAS BORN IN THE NORTHERN ITALIAN CITY OF NOVARA ON JANUARY 3, 1935, AND ORDAINED A PRIEST ON APRIL 29, 1960. AFTER WORKING IN THE DIOCESE OF NOVARA, LAJOLO ENTERED THE HOLY SEE'S PRESTIGIOUS DIPLOMATIC SCHOOL, THE PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY, IN 1968 AND OBTAINED A DOCTORATE IN CANON LAW (CHURCH LAW). HE ENTERED THE HOLY SEE'S FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1970. ARCHBISHOP LAJOLO HAS SERVED AT THE NUNCIATURE IN GERMANY AND AT THE HOLY SEE'S FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE FUTURE ARCHBISHOP WAS A PROFESSOR AT THE PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY FROM 1985 UNTIL 1989. IN 1988 HE WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY (NUMBER 2 POSITION) OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PATRIMONY OF THE HOLY SEE (ADMINISTERS THE PROPERTIES OWNED BY THE HOLY SEE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR THE ROMAN CURIA TO FUNCTION). HE WAS ORDAINED AN ARCHBISHOP IN 1989. POPE JOHN PAUL II APPOINTED LAJOLO AS NUNCIO TO GERMANY IN 1995, WHERE HE HAS GENERALLY AVOIDED THE LIMELIGHT. APART FROM HIS NATIVE ITALIAN, THE ARCHBISHOP SPEAKS ENGLISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN.

13. (U) LAJOLO WAS THE HOLY SEE'S POINT MAN DURING THE 2000 CONFRONTATION WITH GERMAN CATHOLICS OVER CHURCH-BASED COUNSELING CENTERS PROVIDING CERTIFICATES LATER USED TO PROCURE ABORTIONS. THE VATICAN ORDERED GERMANY'S BISHOPS TO DROP PREGNANCY COUNSELING FROM THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CENTERS TO PREVENT CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN STATE-PROVIDED ABORTIONS.

14. (SBU) GERMAN EMBASSY DCM, WHO MET WITH LAJOLO BEFORE BEGINNING HIS ASSIGNMENT DESCRIBED HIM AS SOMEONE WHO HOLDS HIS CARDS VERY CLOSE TO HIS CHEST. ONE CURRENT SECRETARIAT OF STATE OFFICIAL WHO STUDIED UNDER LAJOLO FOR THREE YEARS AT THE HOLY SEE'S ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY -- THE VATICAN'S DIPLOMATIC TRAINING SCHOOL -- SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHERE LAJOLO STOOD PERSONALLY ON MOST ISSUES. AS NUNCIO IN GERMANY, LAJOLO WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION OF GERMAN BISHOPS, BUT HIS INVOLVEMENT ON BROADER INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES WOULD HAVE BEEN LIMITED.

15. (SBU) ONE JOURNALIST WHO HAS RECENTLY INTERVIEWED LAJOLO TOLD US THAT LAJOLO'S MOTHER WAS AMERICAN, HAVING MOVED TO THE U.S. AS A CHILD. SHE WAS RAISED THERE AND RETURNED TO ITALY, BUT RETAINED HER CITIZENSHIP THROUGHOUT HER LIFE. LAJOLO REPORTEDLY TRAVELED WITHIN THE U.S. TWENTY YEARS AGO -- POSSIBLY ON AN INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM -- AND HE HAS KEPT UP HIS TIES IN THE U.S. HIS DEPUTY IN BERLIN FOR HIS EIGHT YEARS AS NUNCIO WAS AN AMERICAN FROM SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA. THE JOURNALIST DESCRIBED LAJOLO AS OPEN TO AND "VERY FRIENDLY TOWARD" THE U.S.

NICHOLSON

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